



Newsletter of Deccan Birders (formerly Birdwatchers' Society of Andhra Pradesh)
New Series Volume 23 Number 3 March 2026

FIELD TRIP-1: Sunday, April 5, 2026, 6.15AM: Kistareddypet Lake, Hyderabad. Meeting Point(s): SVM Grand, Miyapur, 05:20AM; BHEL Bus Stop, Lingampally, 05:45AM. Trip Coordinator(s): Gurukumar KR (Mobile: 96188-27407)

Kistareddypet Lake, located near Patancheru, has recently caught the attention of birders. The lake is home to more than 110 species of birds, including large flocks of Little Stint, Black-winged Stilt, Black-tailed Godwit, Garganey, Gadwall etc. One can also spot Ruff, Spot-billed Pelican, Common Snipe, Greater Flamingo, Common Redshank, Temminck's Stint and other shore birds. The surrounding areas also host species like Mongolian Short-toed Lark, Citrine Wagtail, Baya Weaver, Indian Golden Oriole etc. This is a great opportunity to observe and record the diversity of migratory waterbirds and shore birds in this important habitat as winter draws to a close in the state.

FIELD TRIP-2: Sunday, April 26, 2026, 7.30AM: Damagundam Reserve Forest, Nizamabad Dt. Meeting Point(s): NMDC, Masab Tank, 05:00AM. Coordinator(s): Srikanth Bhamidipati (Mobile: 97388-40070)

Damagundam Reserve Forest, a hotspot for avian diversity and endemism. Damagundam Reserve Forest is located in Vikarabad district of Telangana, about 70 km from Hyderabad. It is one of the two major reserve forest blocks in Vikarabad forest range, along with Ananthagiri. The forest is home to a variety of habitats, including dry deciduous, scrub, grassland, wetland and rocky outcrops.

We will cover different habitats and look for the resident and migratory birds that inhabit them. Watch out for Painted Spurfowl, Small Minivet, Yellow-footed Green Pigeon, Indian Blue Robin, Taiga Flycatcher, Ultramarine Flycatcher, Booted Eagle, Bonelli's Eagle, Eurasian Kestrel, Brown Fish Owl etc.; also watch out for rare sightings like Indian Pitta, Malabar Whistling Thrush, Orange-breasted Green Pigeon, Blyth's Paradise-flycatcher and Blue-and-white Flycatcher.

Both trips will be half-day trips, so carry adequate water and breakfast/snacks, and protective gear if required. Non-members are most welcome; however, they are requested to contribute Rs. 100/- per person to the Deccan Birders kitty. New Deccan Birders hats and caps will be available for purchase; please carry adequate cash.

THE HIDDEN WORLD OF INDIRA PARK
Trip Report: Indira Park, Hyderabad, March 15, 2026
Shreyas Mishra (Class XII, Sri Chaitanya Junior College)

My introduction to birding was due to my Maths lecturer Harsh Sir's interest in nature and his wish to take us for birding. He had identified a day where everyone was free from their daily routines. Sir took this opportunity to introduce us to four of the many awesome people he knew. I was also looking forward to this event as it was a new experience for me, and after this I must say that I have a new developed new appreciation for nature. It may be a cliché but it needs repeating, that nature relieves the stress and strain of routine life. In my case it was a break from the endless preparation for IITJEE. It turned out to be more than just a walk in the park.

The event was scheduled on a Sunday morning, between 6:30AM and 9:30AM at Indira Park. Though I was unsure of what to expect, and mildly groggy from waking up early on a Sunday, the experience that followed made it one of the most memorable mornings I have had in a while.

As I entered the park, I spent around ten minutes searching for my friend Sai Ram. Once we found each other, we quickly made our way to the main gate where the event was to begin. Luckily, the session had not yet started, and we were just in time to join the group.



A sketch made by Yadavalli Nimisha after the walk

The event was guided by four experienced experts: Ajit Kumar Mahendra Sir from Deccan Birders, Sadhana Ramachander Ma'am from Nature Lovers of Hyderabad, Praveen Kumar Sir, also from Deccan Birders and Laxmi Singh Ma'am, from Hyderabad Bird Atlas. Their presence added immense value to the experience.

Ajit Sir began the session by sharing the history of Indira Park, giving us a deep appreciation of the place we were exploring. He also provided three pairs of binoculars, which enabled us to observe birds up close. For many of us, it was the first time we had held professional-type binoculars. It felt like we were inducted into some elite club.



Ajit Kumar Mahendra pointing out various birds to the group (Photo: Harshvardhan Bukka)

Ajit Sir took us around the park, pointing out the various trees and birds. His enthusiasm was infectious. For a 79-year-old,

he set new standards for us on how to stay fit. His survey of the park and general exposition was peppered with valuable life advice and witty jokes that often caught us off-guard. He left a deep impression on all of us and gave us a lot to think about. His emphasis on living a plastic-free life and live demonstration of pH value of carbonated drinks made us ponder our lifestyle choices. We are better people for having met him, if only for a few hours.



Spot-billed Duck (Photo: Harshvardhan Bukka)



Sadhana Ramachander speaking to the group (Photo: Harshvardhan Bukka)

Sadhana Ma'am then guided us through the diverse plant life within the park. She explained the significance of various tree species and spoke passionately about her efforts to conserve Banyan trees across Telangana. Her dedication to environmental conservation was truly inspiring. Ma'am told us about Weaver bird's nest design – how the entrance is vertical and eggs are kept isolated in a different compartment. Also, the birds keep their nests hanging from hard-to-reach spots or above water – all to keep snakes away. Seems like even the Avengers could take inspiration from Weaver birds for their headquarters!



Grey Heron (Photo: Harshvardhan Bukka)

Praveen Sir introduced us to an interesting concept – how certain plants placed in lakes act as natural purifiers, helping to clean and maintain water quality. It was amazing to learn how nature has its own systems for balance and sustainability. He talked about tissue culture and plant biotechnology which helped us place our theoretical knowledge in the bigger picture. Sir even showed us an abandoned nest made by Weaver Ants. He described its engineering made from purely natural materials. What marvellous engineering it was! Nature seems to have answers to all our problems even before we have asked them.



Praveen Kumar addressing the group (Photo: Harshvardhan Bukka)

Praveen Sir pointed out so many plants and trees along our path and described their uses – medicinal or otherwise. It was very enlightening. He even encouraged us not to restrict ourselves to Engineering. He told us that we should learn about plants, animals, farming, carpentry and anything we could get our hands on. He said that's how their generation grew and urged us not to restrict our options. In the world of AI it seems like an excellent idea.



Indian Grey Hornbill (Photo: Harshvardhan Bukka)



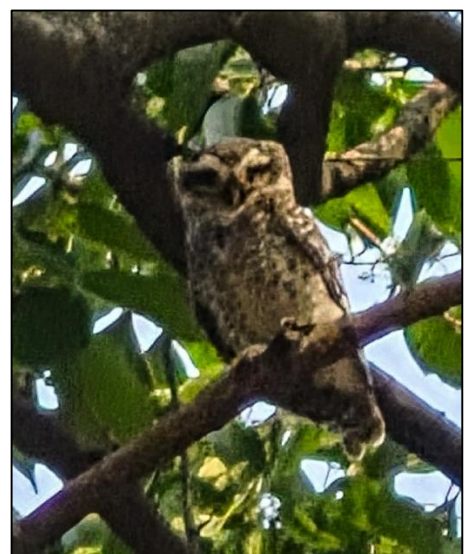
Black Kite silhouetted against the sky (Photo: Harshvardhan Bukka)



Indian Pond Heron (Photo: Harshvardhan Bukka)

Of course, the highlight of the event was observing the birds. We spotted several species, including Black Kites, an Indian Grey Hornbill and lively Parakeets (and not Parrots, as we learnt). Laxmi Ma'am, the bird expert, made the event even more memorable by spotting a flock of Golden Orioles flying in giant loops, weaving patterns between the sky and the pond.

Towards the end of the session, we were lucky enough to see a Spotted Owlet, which was a perfect conclusion to the morning.



Spotted Owlet (Photo: Harshvardhan Bukka)



Indian Palm Squirrel (Photo: Harshvardhan Bukka)

As we were leaving I asked Sadhana ma'am and Ajit sir what message she had for us. Sadhana Ma'am urged the youth of our country to take a few minutes of our time to connect with nature and look up at the trees and realize the immense value they hold for everyone. Ajit Sir added that we the youth are the future of our country and we should take initiative in preserving the nature and act as responsible citizens and realize the importance of environmental conservation. I'm

even reminded of Harsh Sir's reaction – at the start of the event when he saw everyone arrive, he said in apparent awe as he joined the group, "Thank you all for turning up, I didn't think you all will actually turn up! I'm so proud!" I felt proud of us too.

To whoever is reading this, remember, no matter what is causing your stress, whether it is preparation for a competitive exam, or workplace drama, take some time out and go nature-gazing, because who knows the solution to your problems might be in the rustling of trees or in the wingbeat of birds!

A note from Praveen Kumar:

I felt very happy on this trip, as the younger generation showed great enthusiasm to understand the importance of biodiversity. They should be the torch bearers of the future to safeguard our Mother Earth. Some important issues that they should work on in the future are:

- Reducing fossil fuel use
- Protecting forests
- Protecting our rivers and water bodies & oceans
- Improving our liquid and solid waste management
- Making farming a profitable business for farmers



The participants at the walk (Photo: Uma Shankar)

The list of birds seen during the trip:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name
1	Black Kite	<i>Milvus migrans</i>	6	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>
2	Indian Grey Hornbill	<i>Ocyrceros birostris</i>	7	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>
3	Blue Rock Pigeon (feral)	<i>Columba livia</i>	8	Little Cormorant	<i>Microcarbo niger</i>
4	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	9	Indian Golden Oriole	<i>Oriolus kundoo</i>
5	Purple Sunbird	<i>Cinnyris asiaticus</i>			

* * *

THE SPARROW AT THE WINDOW

A note on the occasion of World Sparrow Day, March 20, 2026

Text & Photos: Srikanth Bhamidipati



House Sparrow

You remember the sound before you remember the bird.

It was there when you woke up. It was there through breakfast. It came from the window ledge, the gap in the roof, the balcony railing where something had made itself entirely at home. You never thought to listen for it because it was simply there the way light is there, the way the smell of tea is there – woven into the texture of morning so completely that it required no attention at all.

The House Sparrow.

Chidiya.

The bird so ordinary it had no need of a grander name. The one that hopped along the kitchen windowsill looking for crumbs. That bathed in the courtyard dust with such uninhibited joy it made adults smile even when they were busy. The first bird most of us ever knew – not because we went looking, but because it was already there, already part of us, already woven into the sound of home. And then, at some point quietly, without announcement, it stopped coming.

This is the strange thing about losing something common.

It does not happen in a moment you can point to. It happens in the space between one morning and the next, across months and years, until one day you are standing somewhere familiar, and you realise it is gone. Has been gone for a while. You simply hadn't noticed when it stopped.

Ask anyone over forty when they last saw a sparrow near their home. Watch them pause. Watch the calculation happen not of days, but of years. Some will say two years. Some will say five. Some will trail off, uncertain, because they cannot remember, and that uncertainty is its own kind of answer. Something that was always there simply isn't anymore.

And we almost didn't notice.

Here is what is worth understanding about the sparrow. It was never rare. That was always the point.

We tend to think of birds worth caring about as the ones that are difficult to find – the crane that arrives once a decade, the owl that requires a jungle walk and three hours of patience. These birds matter. But they live at a remove from us. They do not share our mornings.

The sparrow did. It chose us long before we chose it. Long before we had cities, it found the edges of human settlement and decided that this was where it belonged – near our grain, near our rooftops, near the warm gaps in our walls. It was never tame. But it was comfortable. It had been comfortable, alongside us, for centuries.

And all that time, without our knowing it, it was doing something.

It was eating the insects that gathered around our food and our crops. Feeding its chicks almost entirely on insects through the nesting season – tiny creatures that most of us never notice, but that form the base of a chain that everything else depends on. The sparrow was part of an arrangement, ancient and informal, between a bird and the places where people live. We provided, without meaning to, spilled grain and insects drawn to warmth and the gaps in our buildings. The sparrow provided, without us asking: a check on what would otherwise overrun us.

A presence, a sound. A sound that, it turns out, we miss more than we expected.

Because the morning without it is quieter in a way that doesn't feel like peace. It feels like absence.

The sparrow did not leave because it wanted to. It left because we, without meaning to, made staying impossible.

Our new buildings have no gaps. Glass and sealed facades – modern, considered, and entirely uninhabitable for a bird that nests in crevices. The old trees were replaced with ornamental plants that grow no insects and offer no shelter. The grain that used to spill from sacks now comes sealed in plastic. The courtyard where dust baths happened is a parking space. The quiet riverbank where sparrows raised their young is now a road.

We did not decide to remove the sparrow from our lives. We made a hundred smaller decisions, each of which made perfect sense on its own.

And the sparrow had nowhere left to go.

In city after city – Mumbai, Bengaluru, Delhi, Chennai – the numbers tell the same story. Down by half. In some places, down by eighty percent. The state bird of Delhi, disappearing from Delhi. So common globally that no alarm bell rings. But gone from the specific streets, the specific windows, the specific mornings where they once were simply part of what morning meant.

What most of us never knew – because why would we? – when one sparrow was already so perfectly present, is that other sparrows have been living quiet lives across this country, in the corners we never thought to look.



Russet Sparrow

Up in the Himalayan foothills, on cool mountain paths where the air still carries forest in it, a shyer sparrow moves through wooded slopes that most of the plains have never seen. In the arid west, along the reed-threaded riverbanks of Rajasthan and Gujarat, a sparrow so particular in its requirements that it will live nowhere else – not in towns, not in gardens – depends on exactly this narrow strip of intact habitat. As rivers are diverted and wetlands drained, that strip grows narrower by the year.



Sind Sparrow



Spanish Sparrow

In the farmland edges of the north and east, where the city thins into fields, another sparrow holds on where the House Sparrow has already let go. And in winter, on the open plains of the northwest, a visitor arrives from further west – restless, passing through on its own seasonal logic, a reminder that birds live across boundaries we have drawn, but they have not.



Eurasian Tree Sparrow

And then there is one that most people have walked past without knowing it had a name.



Chestnut-shouldered Petronia

The Yellow-throated Sparrow (aka Chestnut-shouldered Petronia) lives in the dry, rocky country of peninsular India the scrublands and open forests of the Deccan, where the land is hard and the trees are sparse, and the sun falls without mercy on bare stone. It is a bird of ledges and crevices in rocky outcrops, of old stone walls and sunbaked cliffs, nesting in places that look, to a human eye, like nothing could possibly live there. It has a small patch of warm yellow at its throat – easy to miss, easy to overlook, the way everything in these dry landscapes asks you to look more carefully before you pass judgement. It does not come to gardens. It does not appear in city parks. It belongs to a version of India that most of us drive through without stopping.

Six sparrows sharing one subcontinent. Each asking something different of the land. Each finding that version of the land harder to hold on to than it was before.

We didn't know most of them were there. And they were disappearing before we learned their names.

And that is the idea behind World Sparrow Day.

It began in 2010, started by a man from Nashik who noticed that the bird everyone assumed was everywhere had, in the places where people lived, quietly started to vanish. The World Sparrow Day is now marked in more than fifty countries. Not because the sparrow is rare. But because common things, once lost, are not easily recovered and because the sparrow's story is one that almost everyone can recognise as their own.

It is not a day for experts. It is a day for the rest of us. For the person who hasn't thought about sparrows in years but, reading this, feels something familiar stir. For the child who has only seen them in books, and the parent who remembers them on the windowsill. For anyone who has stood on a balcony in the early morning and listened, really listened, to what is or isn't there.

Because the sparrow does not need a conservation expedition.

It does not need a national park or a rescue centre.

It needs what it always needed: a crack in a wall where a nest can go. A bowl of water in the summer heat. A handful of

grain. A native plant that grows the insects its chicks depend on. A small, deliberate decision to make a little more space in a life that has, gradually and without meaning to, stopped making space for it.

These are not grand gestures. They take five minutes. And they are exactly what a sparrow requires.

But there is something else the sparrow offers, if you let it. A way back in.

Not everyone will become a birdwatcher. Not everyone needs to. But the sparrow – precisely because it is ordinary, precisely because it asks nothing of you except a moment of attention – is a door.

When you put out a bowl of water on your balcony railing and a sparrow comes to it, something happens that is hard to name but easy to recognise. A small connection forms. You notice whether it comes back. You begin to listen for it in the morning. And in that listening, in that small, daily act of attending to something alive, something in you shifts.

You start to wonder about the sparrow on the mountain path. About the one in the reed bed that nobody sees. About all the lives being lived at the edges of your own, in the narrow margins of land and sky that have not yet been taken.

You start to care about a ledge, a tree, a patch of sky you never thought about before.

This is what common birds do that rare birds cannot. Rare birds require us to go to them. The sparrow comes to us. It lives alongside us, in the same windows, in the same mornings. And when enough of us notice it to register its presence and its absence as something that matters, the sparrow becomes more than a bird.

It becomes a measure of whether the places we have built still have room for life.

So today, go to a window. A balcony. A garden, if you have one, or a patch of sky if you don't. It doesn't need to be anywhere special. It just needs to be where you are.

Listen, if you hear it – that quick, unremarkable chirp that you have been hearing your whole life without knowing it. Stop for a moment, let it register. It is not a small thing, that sound. It means something nearby is still holding on. That a bird which has lived alongside us for centuries has found, in your corner of the city, just enough to survive.

And if you don't hear it, let that silence mean something too.

Let it ask the question the sparrow has been asking all along, in the only language it has. Not a cry for help. Not an accusation. Just a small bird at a window, checking whether there is still space.

The sparrow never asked much. A crack in a wall. A handful of grain. A morning that has room in it for something small and alive. It is not too late to answer.

* * *

MANGROVE CALLING: IN THE GODAVARI'S EMBRACE
Report: Experiences during AWC at Coringa, Kakinada, 2019-2026

Text & Photos: Gurukumar KR



Indian Skimmer

The Godavari is a mighty river that carves its way across the Deccan before finally unravelling into the Bay of Bengal. It doesn't merely reach the coast; it expands, shattering into a vast, intricate delta of distributaries and secret channels near Kakinada. This is the East Godavari River Estuarine Ecosystem (EGREE) – a landscape of global importance where the river's fresh water and the sea's salt meet to create one of India's most vital wetlands.

At the heart of this union lies the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary, home to the second-largest stretch of mangroves in India. These emerald forests are the region's natural bio-shield, a silent, sturdy defence against the fury of cyclones and the slow encroachment of the sea. Beyond protection, Coringa is a nursery for life, sustaining local fisheries and sheltering rare biodiversity like the Fishing Cat and Smooth-coated Otter.

For eight years, every January has found me here, participating in the Asian Waterbird Census (AWC). Coordinated by Wetlands International and the BNHS, this census is a vital annual health check for these wetlands, monitoring the birds that use the Central Asian Flyway as a bridge between worlds. What began as a hobby and a curious engagement has now evolved into a seasonal pilgrimage – a transition from casual birdwatching to a witness of the estuary's shifting pulse.

The Shores of Kumbhabhishekam

The journey often begins where the human world presses hardest against the wild: the shores near the Kumbhabhishekam port. Here, the air is a thick blend of salt spray and diesel. On these mudflats, Lesser Sand Plovers engage in a restless, frantic dance – their tiny, rapid movements silhouetted against a backdrop of towering berths and the slow, mechanical arcs of dredging cranes.



Lesser (aka Tibetan) Sand Plover



Whimbrel

Scanning the shoreline, one can usually pick out the subtle differences among the residents. The Kentish Plovers and Little Ringed Plovers dart through the silt, while the larger Whimbrels and Eurasian Curlews probe the deeper mud with their long, decurved bills.



Eurasian Curlew



Grey (aka Black-bellied) Plover

Occasionally, a Grey Plover stands as a solitary, silver sentinel, and on the rarest of days, the mudflats host the Great Knot, a weary traveller whose presence feels like a gift.



Great Knot

Over nearly a decade, I have watched this threshold fundamentally change. The expansion of the port – the deepening of channels and the relentless reclamation of land – has written a visible story of decline in our annual counts. It leaves the Brahminy Kites to circle over a landscape that feels increasingly fragile and hollowed out.

Yet, life persists in the margins. When the fishing boats arrive, the scene ignites into a chaotic beauty; Gulls and Terns dive with desperate precision, fighting to reclaim a small share of what the nets have taken from the sea. It is a sobering reminder that our work in citizen science is not just about counting

beauty; it is about documenting the steady, quiet rhythm of loss.



Brahminy Kite juvenile

The Fishing Villages and Jetties

At the crack of dawn, the village is a world of blue-grey stillness, where the air is cool and the only movement comes from the Whiskered Terns dipping silently into the freshwater reaches of the river. During these sleepy minutes, the scavengers own the streets; House Crows, Indian Jungle Crows, and both Pied Starlings and Common Mynas move with a quiet, methodical efficiency through the still air.



Fishing boats at the jetty

However, as the morning sun rises, waking the denizens of the villages, the atmosphere shifts, breaking the silence with the stuttering cough of diesel engines and the rhythmic howls of fishermen hauling in the first catch. This ‘whispered’ morning gives way to the clamour of bargaining – a sharp, percussive exchange of prices that serves as a dinner bell for the birds. Now emboldened by the awakening of human energy, the crows become a frantic, bickering cloud over the silver heaps of fish, while the mynas strut with comical bravery between the legs of traders. In the palm fronds overhead, Asian Palm Swifts slice through the first exhaust-tinged light, their blade-like flight mirrored by the rising, rhythmic call of the Asian Koel, which competes with the mechanical hum of the port.



House Sparrow female

Amidst this awakening noise, House Sparrows, Indian Silverbills, and Scaly-breasted Munias flit in busy flocks around the thatched eaves, while the edge of the scrub begins to glow with movement. Rose-ringed Parakeets scream past in emerald streaks, and both Green and Blue-tailed Bee-eaters hawk for insects from the power lines as the village electricity hums to life.



Blue-tailed Bee-eater



Common Hawk Cuckoo

The relentless 'brain-fever' call of the Common Hawk Cuckoo rings out from the taller trees, where Brahminy Starlings and Indian White-eyes move through the foliage, energized by the growing light. Near the ground, the heavy-set Southern Coucal stalks through the damp undergrowth, while Barn Swallows dip low over the water's surface – skimming past the churning

wakes of the first departing boats, a final, graceful bridge between the waking village streets and the wide, open estuary.



Southern Coucal

The Mangrove Corridors: A Vertical World

Leaving the industrial hum and the bustling fishing villages behind, we move by boat into the silent, dense corridors of the Coringa Wildlife Sanctuary. In these tidal creeks, the birdlife is organized by height and habitat, from the upper canopy to the lowest waterline.



Asian Openbill

In the highest branches of the older mangrove trees, Asian Openbills congregate, their distinctive arched mandibles leaving a visible gap designed for prying open snails. They often roost alongside Cormorants and Painted Storks, whose heavy, yellow decurved bills and delicate pink feathers contrast against the deep green foliage.



Little Cormorant

Slightly lower in the canopy or probing the soft mud at the roots, the three ibises of the estuary make their appearance. The Black-headed Ibis stands out with its white plumage and naked black head, often seen in small, stoic groups. In the dappled light of the inner mangroves, the Glossy Ibis transforms from a dark silhouette into a shimmering display of iridescent greens and purples. Occasionally, on the drier landward edges of the mangroves, the Red-naped Ibis – the erstwhile Black Ibis – can be found, identifiable by its crimson crown and the white patch on its wing that flashes when it takes flight.

Below them, the creek edges belong to the kingfishers. The White-throated Kingfisher perches on drier branches, identifiable by its massive red bill and chocolate-brown breast. Closer to the water, the Common Kingfisher flashes past like a turquoise arrow, while the Pied Kingfisher hovers with mechanical precision over the centre of the channel. The Black-capped Kingfisher is the standout mangroves specialist, with its velvet-black crown and deep purple mantle.



Black-capped Kingfisher

The Hidden Herons: A Game of Shadows

As the boat glides closer to the muddy banks, we enter a world where visibility is a hard-won prize. Here, we play a game of shadows with the most deceptive residents of the mangroves – the Herons. Among the tangled roots, the herons huddle in the deep shade, testing every bit of our optical gear and patience.

The Grey Heron stands tall and ashen, a motionless statue against the mud. In contrast, the Purple Heron is slimmer and more snake-like, its rich chestnut and purple hues allowing it to vanish into the reeds with terrifying ease. Along the very edge of the waterline, the small Little Heron (Striated Heron) stays crouched and stony, appearing more like a knot of wood than a bird.



Little (aka Striated) Heron

The real challenge of this ‘game’, however, is the huddle of Pond Herons and Black-crowned Night Herons, particularly the juveniles tucked under the shadows – they are masters of disguise. Both possess streaked brown plumage that mirrors the dappled light of the thicket. The subtlest of cues, heavier bills and the fiery yellow orange eyes of the juvenile Night Heron, contrasts with the Pond Heron’s more muted look. The mystery only truly vanishes the moment they take flight. As they break cover, the Night Heron reveals broad, dark, powerful wings. But it is the Pond Heron that provides the greatest surprise – bursting from its brown, camouflaged huddle with a flash of brilliant, snowy-white wings that were completely hidden while it was perched.

Waders of the Silt

While the boats are essential, the rhythmic thrum of the diesel motor is a frustrating paradox; its mechanical heartbeat precedes us, often sending the kingfishers and the Little Herons retreating into the shadows before we can even lock focus. We usually cut the motors to drift silently into the bend but nature often has its own whistle blower. As the tide pulls back, the Common Redshank emerges; it is a self-appointed, high-pitched neurotic of the mudflats. Just as the boat settles and I raise my lens, the air is shattered by a shrill, piercing ‘Twee-hu-hu! Twee-hu-hu’ – it’s the sentinel of the marsh, but in that moment, it’s just the bird that blew our cover. The Kingfisher vanishes into the dark tangles of the roots, and the Redshank takes flight, mocking us with its bright orange legs and white edged wings.



Common Redshank

You sit there in the sudden, ringing silence – sweaty, annoyed, and being shouted at by a bird – realising that in this delta, you are never as stealthy as you think. We scan the silt for the more elegant Spotted Redshank in its pale winter coat, but often our eyes are drawn to the larger, sturdier Common Greenshank. It stands out with its greenish legs and a slightly stouter bill that has a subtle upward kink.



Common Greenshank

In the shallower, freshwater-influenced pools, we find the ‘miniature’ version of the Greenshank: the Marsh Sandpiper. Much more delicate and daintier with a pencil-thin, perfectly straight bill and exceptionally long, spindly legs that give it a graceful, high-stepping gait.



Marsh Sandpiper



Common Sandpiper

Joining them are the Common Sandpipers, perpetually bobbing their tails, and the solitary Green Sandpipers, which wait until the last moment to reveal their brilliant white rumps as they dart into the dark mangrove foliage. In the more open, marshy margins, the Wood Sandpiper makes a frequent appearance. Far more social than its ‘Green’ cousin, with a heavily spangled upperparts and a prominent white supercilium that gives it a bright-eyed, alert expression.



Golden Jackal

Shadows That Walk

The mangroves are also home to some interesting mammals walking among the shadows of the mangroves. A Golden Jackal trotting along the muddy edge, its tawny coat a stark contrast to the deep green leaves is a rare glimpse into the terrestrial life of this wetland. Every year, I scan the dense roots with a sense of longing, hoping for a glimpse of the truly elusive: the Smooth-coated Otter or the endangered Fishing Cat. To see them would have been a crowning moment, yet even their absence reminds me of the wild mysteries these mangroves still guard.

The Ghost of the Creek

As we transition toward the open water, we encounter the ghostly gathering consisting of the towering Great Egret standing like a towering, stately statue, its long neck kinked with a patience that feels ancient.



Great Egret

Next to it the Median Egret is the ‘middle child’ – less imposing but perfectly balanced. Then there is the Little Egret with its golden slipper foot, dramatically hunting in the shallows. Its bright yellow feet flash against the dark mud as it stirs the silt to life.



Little Egret

The most confusing of the lot is the Western Reef Egret, appearing as either a deep, slate-grey or a pure white twin to the others. We have to look for the heavier, decurved bill and that ‘hunch’ – a posture that makes it look like it carries the weight of the estuary on its shoulders.

Moving away from the creeks, we gaze back through the thinning fog like most of the early hours. As the rising sun begins to add its first touch of glare to the water, the individual forms lose their edges and blue into a shimmering ghostly white line.



Western Reef Egret

The Lords of the Vertical World

As we begin to leave the narrowing creeks of the Corangi (which seems to be a local way of calling Coringa) and the towering *Avicennia* canopy, our vertical words start to pull back. Here at the threshold of the open water, the Brahminy Kites reign as the undisputed lord. They bridge the tangled interior we are leaving behind with the vast, open mudflats ahead. You see them everywhere: perched with a regal white-headed stillness on the canopies, withered driftwoods or sun-bleached fishing poles that jut from the mud. Their chestnut wings are a constant flash of colour against the receding green canopies. While these generalists scavenge at the noisy jetties, here they are true predators, watching the creeks from their high balconies. Our boats, census and gear are merely the outliers here – brief, mechanical intrusions into a world they have mastered for centuries.

The Mudflats of Etimoga and Bhairavapalem

As the narrow creeks widen, the landscape opens into the vast, shimmering mudflats of Etimoga and Bhairavapalem. Here, the success of our count depends entirely on the local boatmen. Their knowledge is ancestral; they navigate shifting sub-surface channels and time the tides with a precision no GPS could mimic. Their curiosity about why these birds travel thousands of miles leads to wonderful exchanges, building a bridge between science and local life.



Indian Skimmers with assorted terns

The spectacle here is surreal. Indian Skimmers huddle in massive, mixed assemblages with a variety of terns. When the flock is spooked, they rise as one shimmering, chaotic cloud before settling back into the silt. Sorting through this ‘white-out’ of terns is notoriously difficult.



Gull-billed Tern flock



Greater Crested Tern

The Caspian Tern is easy to spot by its massive, carrot-red bill, but telling the Gull-billed Tern (with its thick, short black bill) from the Greater Crested Tern (with its lemon-yellow bill) and Lesser Crested Tern (with its slim, orange-ish bill) requires a steady hand. These contrast with the Whiskered Terns, which stay in the more inland, brackish pools.



Whiskered Tern

In the netted enclosures left by the fishermen, the water becomes a frenzy. Brown-headed and Black-headed Gulls hover and dive in pursuit of fish. The Brown-headed Gull is larger, with pale eyes and broad ‘white mirrors’ on its wing tips, while the Black-headed Gull is more delicate and lacks those bold white patches.



Brown-headed Gull



Black-headed Gull

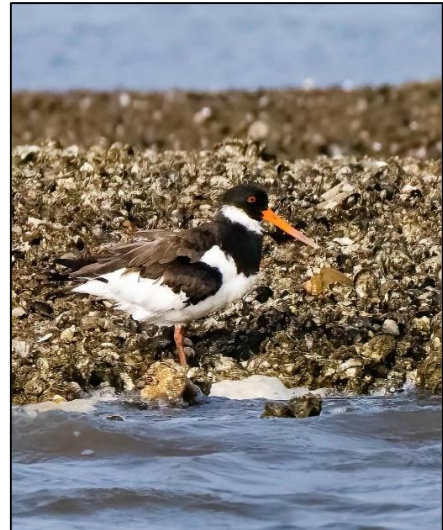


Pacific Golden Plover

On the drier patches, the plovers hold court. The Pacific Golden Plovers are a masterclass in texture, their backs a spangled mosaic of gold and black, contrasting sharply with the cold, silver-grey of the Grey Plovers. Near them, huge congregations of smaller plovers create an identification challenge that defines the AWC experience.

The Little Ringed Plover is usually the easiest to pick out, immediately obvious by its bright yellow eye-ring and the bold, complete black collar that circles its neck. From this complete ring, we move to the Kentish Plover, whose collar is notably 'broken' – appearing as two dark tabs that never meet on its chest, setting it apart with its dainty, paler, sandy-grey plumage. This daintiness is in sharp contrast to the Lesser Sand Plover, which presents a much sturdier profile with a heavier, bulbous black bill, thicker, dark legs, and a more 'smudged' brown breast-band. However, the high-energy flight and

restless movement of the mixed flocks of Little Stints often complicates the plover identification process further.



Eurasian Oystercatcher

Adding a flash of bold colour to this earth-toned assembly are the Eurasian Oystercatchers, their black-and-white plumage and carrot-orange bills standing out against the muted silt. Further along the mudflats, the Terek Sandpiper stands out with its improbable profile. It moves with a distinctive, energetic 'teetering' motion, but its most striking feature is its long, noticeably upcurved bill. Watching a Terek hunt is a joy; they often sprint after prey with their bright orange, relatively short legs, looking slightly front-heavy but incredibly graceful.



Terek Sandpiper



Ruddy Turnstone

Nearby, the Ruddy Turnstones provide a rugged contrast. While the other birds probe the sand, the Turnstones are the heavy lifters. True to their name, they use their short, slightly upturned, wedge-shaped bills to flick over stones and debris. Even in their more subdued winter colours, their orange legs and the bold, harlequin pattern on their chests make them unmistakable. They possess a sturdy, hunched silhouette that feels much more grounded than the ethereal stints.



Black-tailed Godwit

Amidst the sprawling silt of Etimoga, the Godwits offer a lesson in patience. The Black-tailed Godwit is the mainstay here, often seen in healthy numbers, its long, dead-straight bill moving with the rhythmic precision of a sewing machine as it probes the deep mud. When they take flight, their bold white wing bars and crisp black tail bands create a striking graphic contrast against the grey sky.



Bar-tailed Godwit

On much rarer occasions, a Bar-tailed Godwit might be spotted. Unlike the common Black-tailed, this visitor is far more elusive and solitary in these waters. Its profile is subtler, with a bill that carries a gentle, feminine upcurve. It lacks the flashy wing bars of its cousin, showing instead an intricate, barred pattern on its tail – a quiet, beautiful reward for those who take the time to scan the furthest reaches of the mudflats.

Pulse of the Moon: A World of Shifting Sands and Banking Birds

As we leave the mudflats of Etimoga and Bhairavapalem behind, the landscape enters a state of constant flux. Between the mainland and the open sea lies a world governed entirely by the moon. Here, the falling tide reveals a hidden ephemeral world – temporary sandbars and silty islands that emerge from

the grey water like clockwork, existing for only a few hours a day.

In the soft light of the morning, these exposed banks become a canvas of incredible scale and beauty. It is a temporary carnival of waders where the sheer numbers defy easy counting and identification. Hundreds of Little Stints, Plovers, Waders, and Small Pratincoles descend upon these fleeting islands in a frantic, mixed population of activity. This sense of wonder continues into the air, which remains alive with the aerial displays of these winged wanderers. Watching them bank and turn in unison is a spectacle of light and motion. A massive, living ribbon that shifts as the sunlight catches it. In one heartbeat, the entire mass – a dull, earthy brown transforms into a flash of brilliant, snowy white as they reveal their bellies to the sun. This shimmering ‘turn’ of the flock over the disappearing banks is a sight of pure awe. There is no quiet here; it is a crowded, nomadic marketplace of life that knows, just as our boatmen do, that their stage will soon vanish back into the Bay of Bengal.



Mixed flock of Curlew and Broad-billed Sandpipers, Dunlin, Little Stint and Lesser Sand Plover

The High Seas

The transition from the sheltered, tea-coloured waters of the estuary to the open Bay of Bengal is a physical threshold. To reach Hope Island, you must leave the stillness behind. The high seas are a different beast; the boat rocks relentlessly, and the air is thick with a salt spray that stings the eyes and coats the lenses.

The heaving of the deck makes it an ordeal to keep binoculars steady; your arms ache as you try to lock on to a moving speck in the distance. The cool wind of the delta is a deceptive friend – it masks the intensity of the sun on the back of your neck, leaving behind a dark, deep tan on every inch of exposed skin, a permanent souvenir.

Amidst this spray and motion, there is a distinct camaraderie that only field volunteers understand. The organizers usually hand out a modest kit – some fruit, bread, and jam – and there is something profoundly beautiful about sharing that simple meal on a heaving boat. In those moments, between the splashes of saltwater and the shared laughter, the bond over our love for birds becomes as tangible as the rocking hull beneath us. Again, the boatman’s skill is the silent anchor; he reads the swells with a calm that allows us to focus on the horizon.



Osprey

Often, during these high-sea crossings, an Osprey would appear – gliding low over the waves with powerful, deliberate wingbeats. I have watched it hover, pause, and then plunge feet-first into the surf to rise triumphantly with a writhing fish, a lone hunter stitching together the river and the ocean.

Hope Island: Godavari's Guardian Angel

As we approach Hope Island, its significance becomes as clear as the horizon. This narrow, tadpole-shaped barrier island is a gift from the river itself, formed over the last few centuries from the massive sediment load carried by the Godavari. It acts as a natural breakwater, absorbing the fury of the Bay of Bengal's waves and protecting the Kakinada coast from erosion and the port from silting. Without this fragile strip of sand, the calm, brackish waters of the Coringa mangroves would be swallowed by the open sea. As we approach the uninhabited barrier of Hope Island, the water shallows, and we disembark to walk the windswept shores; it feels like stepping onto the last outpost of the wild. There is a profound, primal joy in walking the shores of Hope Island barefoot, feeling the wet silt between your toes as you track a flock of sandpipers. It is a moment of pure connection to the earth. But that connection is often violently broken. The modern world intrudes even here, in the form of a jagged shard of a discarded bottle or a piece of glass hidden in the sand. The sharp, sudden pain of a cut in the foot is a visceral reminder that even this remote sanctuary is not immune to the debris of human carelessness.



Red Ghost Crab

The beach itself is alive with more than just birds. The little Red Ghost Crabs (*Ocypode macrocera*) are the island's comic relief. With their stalk-like eyes and vibrant red carapaces, their antics are mesmerizing. They stand like tiny, defiant sentinels until you get too close, at which point they break into a frantic, sideways dash, disappearing into their sandy burrows with a speed that seems impossible for their size. Watching them scuttle away, legs blurred in motion, adds a touch of whimsy to the serious business of the census.

Amidst the comedic dash of Red Ghost Crabs, the beach is a theatre of shorebirds. Huge, restless flocks of Sand Plovers and Kentish Plovers are joined by a swirling mass of stints. Sorting through a mixed flock of Little Stints and Temminck's Stints is a masterclass in observation: Little Stints are high-energy, with brighter, more rufous tones on their mantles and dark, sturdy legs. Temminck's Stints appear more 'mousy' and elongated, with a smoother, grey-brown back and, most tellingly, yellowish-green legs that distinguish them from the black-legged Little Stints.

It was in one of these frantic, mixed gatherings of Curlew Sandpipers and Dunlins that I had my most memorable encounter. Among the crowd, I spotted the Broad-billed Sandpiper. It felt like a reward for eight years of persistence. While the Curlew Sandpiper is elegant with its long, decurved bill, the Broad-billed is shorter, with a bill that kinks downward specifically at the tip. But the real giveaway was its face – that unique 'split' supercilium, or double eyestripe, that gives it a distinctively patterned look. I have seen it only once in nearly a decade; a reminder of the rarity and fragility of these migratory journeys.



Sanderling

Right at the frothy edge of the tide, the Sanderlings perform their signature 'clockwork' dance. Unlike the stationary Plovers, Sanderlings in their pale winter coats are in constant motion, chasing the receding waves to snatch tiny crustaceans and then racing back up the slope just heartbeats ahead of the incoming foam. The easiest way to pick them out – aside from their frantic running – is the lack of a hind toe, leaving them with a clean, three-toed footprint in the wet sand.



Pallas's Gull

Out in the deeper water surrounding the island, the giants of the gull world take over. We spot the Heuglin's Gull, a formidable bird with a dark, slate-grey mantle and yellow legs. Alongside them are the Pallas's Gulls, massive and commanding. In January, many are beginning their transition, their large, powerful orange-and-black bills standing out even as their hoods begin to darken for the breeding season.

The Cost of Progress: A Landscape Under Siege, Greed and Ghost Nets

But the eight-year arc of my journey has not only been one of discovery; it has been one of witnessing a deepening crisis. In recent years, the horizon has been cluttered by the machinery of aggressive offshore gas exploration. The silence of the high seas is increasingly broken by industrial noise of dredging and deep-sea seismic activity.



Great and Red Knots

At the Kumbhabhishekam port area, I have watched the counts dwindle as the expansion of the port – the deeper dredging, new berths, and constant reclamation—erodes the feeding grounds of the very birds we come to protect. The Knots, once more common here, have been pushed to the furthest, most secluded slivers of mud to escape the industrial clamour.



Olive Ridley Turtle

I have walked the beaches of Hope Island and found them littered not with shells, but with the tragic remains of Olive Ridley sea turtles. These ancient voyagers, coming home to nest, are met instead with the lethal combination of deep exploration and 'ghost nets' – discarded fishing gear that drifts like invisible snares in the water. To see a beach dotted with dead turtles is a visceral, heart-breaking reminder of how our relentless greed for energy and resources kills the very life we are trying to count.

A Calling for Resilience

Eight years on, these annual counts remain a calling – a blend of adventure, technical rigor, and a deep, often painful connection to the Godavari. These years have shown me beauty, yes – but also erosion, indifference, and the accelerating cost of progress. What remains clear is that these wetlands cannot wait for policies to catch up, nor can they rely on the shrinking memories of those who once knew their abundance.

If this estuary is to survive, it will be because ordinary people – boatmen, volunteers, children, citizens – choose to defend it. The Godavari has carried life for millennia. Now, it needs us to carry responsibility. The next decade will decide the fate of this delta. The question is no longer whether the birds will land, it is whether we will rise fast enough to ensure they have a place to land. These wetlands do not ask for perfection from us – only attention, only care, only the willingness to stand by them as they change. As I look across the mangroves one more time, I realize that resilience is not a guarantee; it is a choice – one we must make for them, and with them. And until the day the river stops calling, I will keep coming back to listen.

The list of birds seen during the visits:

Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Location / Habitat	Sl No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Location / Habitat
1	Indian Skimmer	<i>Rynchops albicollis</i>	Etimoga / Bhairavapalem	6	Black-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa limosa</i>	Etimoga (Common)
2	Great Knot	<i>Calidris tenuirostris</i>	Mudflats (Rare visitor)	7	Bar-tailed Godwit	<i>Limosa lapponica</i>	Etimoga (Rare/Elusive)
3	Black-headed Ibis	<i>Threskiornis melanocephalus</i>	Inner Mangroves	8	Curlew Sandpiper	<i>Calidris ferruginea</i>	Hope Island
4	Painted Stork	<i>Mycteria leucocephala</i>	Mangrove Canopy	9	Lesser Sand Plover	<i>Anarhynchus mongolus</i>	Mudflats/Village
5	Eurasian Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>	Mudflats	10	Kentish Plover	<i>Anarhynchus alexandrinus</i>	Mudflats

S No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Location / Habitat	S No	Species Name	Scientific Name	Location / Habitat
11	Little Ringed Plover	<i>Charadrius dubius</i>	Mudflats	43	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	Shallows
12	Pacific Golden Plover	<i>Pluvialis fulva</i>	Mudflats	44	Intermediate Egret	<i>Ardea intermedia</i>	Shallows
13	Grey Plover	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	Mudflats sentinel	45	Little Egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>	Shallows
14	Whimbrel	<i>Numenius phaeopus</i>	Mudflats	46	Western Reef Egret	<i>Egretta gularis</i>	Shallows
15	Eurasian Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Mudflats	47	Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>	Creek banks
16	Terek Sandpiper	<i>Xenus cinereus</i>	Mudflats	48	Purple Heron	<i>Ardea purpurea</i>	Creek banks
17	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	Debris/Stones	49	Little (Striated) Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>	Waterline
18	Sanderling	<i>Calidris alba</i>	Hope Island tide-line	50	Indian Pond Heron	<i>Ardeola grayii</i>	Roots/Foliage
19	Little Stint	<i>Calidris minuta</i>	Hope Island	51	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Roots/Foliage
20	Temminck's Stint	<i>Calidris temminckii</i>	Hope Island	52	Black-capped Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon pileata</i>	Mangrove Creeks
21	Broad-billed Sandpiper	<i>Calidris falcinellus</i>	Hope Island (Rare)	53	White-throated Kingfisher	<i>Halcyon smyrnensis</i>	Mangrove Creeks
22	Common Redshank	<i>Tringa totanus</i>	Mudbanks	54	Common Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>	Mangrove Creeks
23	Spotted Redshank	<i>Tringa erythropus</i>	Mudbanks	55	Pied Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle rudis</i>	Mangrove Creeks
24	Common Greenshank	<i>Tringa nebularia</i>	Mudbanks	56	Asian Palm Swift	<i>Cypsiurus balasiensis</i>	Jetties/Village
25	Marsh Sandpiper	<i>Tringa stagnatilis</i>	Freshwater pools	57	Asian Koel	<i>Eudynamis scolopaceus</i>	Jetties/Village
26	Common Sandpiper	<i>Actitis hypoleucos</i>	Mudbanks	58	Common Hawk Cuckoo	<i>Hierococcyx varius</i>	Scrub/Village
27	Green Sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>	Dark foliage	59	Southern Coucal	<i>Centropus sinensis parroti</i>	Scrub/Village
28	Wood Sandpiper	<i>Tringa glareola</i>	Open marshy pools	60	Rose-ringed Parakeet	<i>Psittacula krameri</i>	Scrub/Village
29	Caspian Tern	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>	Mudflats	61	Green Bee-eater	<i>Merops orientalis</i>	Scrub/Village
30	Gull-billed Tern	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>	Mudflats	62	Blue-tailed Bee-eater	<i>Merops philippinus</i>	Scrub/Village
31	Greater Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bergii</i>	Mudflats	63	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Estuary bridge
32	Lesser Crested Tern	<i>Thalasseus bengalensis</i>	Mudflats	64	Asian Pied Starling	<i>Gracupica contra</i>	Jetties/Village
33	Whiskered Tern	<i>Chlidonias hybrida</i>	Brackish pools	65	Common Myna	<i>Acridotheres tristis</i>	Jetties/Village
34	Brown-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus brunnicephalus</i>	Netted enclosures	66	Brahminy Starling	<i>Sturnia pagodarum</i>	Scrub/Village
35	Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Netted enclosures	67	House Crow	<i>Corvus splendens</i>	Jetties/Village
36	Heuglin's Gull	<i>Larus fuscus heuglini</i>	Offshore	68	Indian Jungle Crow	<i>Corvus macrorhynchos culminatus</i>	Jetties/Village
37	Pallas's Gull	<i>Ichthyæetus ichthyæetus</i>	Offshore	69	Indian White-eye	<i>Zosterops palpebrosus</i>	Scrub/Village
38	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	High Seas	70	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Jetties/Village
39	Brahminy Kite	<i>Haliastur indus</i>	Port area	71	Indian Silverbill	<i>Euodice malabarica</i>	Jetties/Village
40	Asian Openbill	<i>Anastomus oscitans</i>	Mangrove Canopy	72	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i>	Jetties/Village
41	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	Inner Mangroves	73	Booted Warbler	<i>Iduna caligata</i>	Scrub/Village
42	Red-naped Ibis	<i>Pseudibis papillosa</i>	Landward edges	74	Small Pratincole	<i>Glareola lactea</i>	Creek banks

Some other photos taken during the visits:



Booted Warbler



Brown-headed Gull



Great Knot



Olive Ridley Turtle



Pallas's Gull



Indian Skimmer



Small Pratincole



Terek Sandpiper

* * *

Bird of the Month

Text and Photos: Umesh Mani

Rosy Minivet (*Pericrocotus roseus*)



Rosy Minivet Male (L) and Female (R) (Kaladungi, Uttarakhand, May 09, 2024)

Order: Passeriformes
Family: Campephagidae
Genus: *Pericrocotus*
Species: *P. roseus*
Size: 18-20 cm
IUCN Status: Least Concern

Description & distribution: The Rosy Minivet is a pale, washed-out looking minivet that is widely distributed across a large part of Asia, from Afghanistan east across Pakistan, India, Nepal, Laos, Myanmar, Bhutan, China, Bangladesh, Thailand and Vietnam. In India, it is found from the western Himalayas east to Arunachal Pradesh and the hills of Nagaland and Manipur up to 1800m during summers, and moves to the peninsula during the winter.

The male has a grey head, white throat, rosy pink breast, and a striking red 'apostrophe' on the dark grey-brown upperwings, besides pinkish-red edges to tertials and pinkish rump. The female shows yellow in place of the male's red and pink, but is otherwise similar. Rump is olive or olive-yellow. Legs and feet are black in both, and both have prominent dark lores. The juvenile has upperparts with yellowish scales. Only one subspecies is recognized.

Habitat & behaviour: The natural habitats of the Rosy Minivet are deciduous or evergreen forest, subtropical or tropical moist lowland and moist montane forests, lightly wooded country, and sometimes even gardens. It is arboreal and somewhat sluggish moving compared to other minivets. It is usually seen in pairs, but does form flocks outside of the breeding season. It breeds in a wide range of lowland and foothill forests, including many parts of the Himalayas, and favours hill and valley forests in the winter. Its diet consists mainly of insects and other small arthropods. Its call is a squeaky whistling *whiririri*, and it may also give a twittering trill in flight.

Nesting: The Rosy Minivet breeds mainly between May and June in the Himalayas. The nest is usually a deep cup of roots, twigs and grass stems covered with cobwebs and lichen, and is usually built mainly by the female, with the male assisting. It is usually located 3-10m above ground on a horizontal tree branch. The usual clutch consists of 3-4 eggs, almost white but marked with blotches of brown. The Rosy Minivet is known to hybridize with the closely-related Brown-rumped Minivet, seen in parts of China.

Local name: The Rosy Minivet is known as '*Gulabi bulalchashm*' in Hindi and '*Dao ribi*' in Cachar.

* * *

For Private Circulation Only

Editors: Shanti Mani, Umesh Mani

Email: bsap.pitta@gmail.com

For information, write to: Deccan Birders, PO Box 45, Banjara Hills, Hyderabad – 500034. **Website:** www.deccanbirders.in. **E-group:** <http://groups.google.co.in/group/deccanbirders>. **Society membership** (in Rs.): Annual: 500 per annum; Student: 200 per annum; Corporate: 2000 per annum; Life: 3000. (Add Rs 75 for outstation cheques.)